

Maine: Portland, Camden & Acadia National Park

Tour-Only Itinerary

Before you, the distant summits surrounding Mt. Battie lie cloaked in forest. A trio of islands float in a shimmering bay. It's a grand scene, and it inspired one of history's great writers, Edna St. Vincent Millay, to contemplate an "immensity made manifold" in her poem "Renaissance." Marveling at the vastness, you think she got it right. But during this journey, words sometimes elude you. A low-tide trek along the ocean floor leads to Bar Island; sweeping cliffside sea views are accompanied by a soundtrack of foamy breakwaters along Great Head Trail; the Quiet Side of Mt. Desert Island is graced by the call of loons across tranquil waters. Throughout this hiking tour of Acadia National Park and the Maine Coast, the convenience of having your own car adds a sense of freedom and possibility. It leaves you wondering how such immensity can feel so intimate.



Highlights

- Enjoy a personal touch and graciousness from your innkeepers, the embodiment of Maine's warmth and friendliness.
- Hop a ferry over to Peaks Island for a walk among summer cottages, rural byways and nature preserves, surrounded by the sweeping Atlantic.
- Admire the legendary lighthouses of Maine's stunning coast, including the Rockland Breakwater Lighthouse, a highlight of one of your most dramatic walking trails.
- Delight in Quiet Side of Mount Desert Island, and explore authentic fishing villages dotted with traditional boats and lobster traps.

- Witness “the first sunrise in the U.S.” when you drive to the summit of Cadillac Mountain.

On all Self-Guided Adventures you can count on ...



A local representative
available 24/7.



Gracious accommodations
that are a clean, comfortable
home away from home.



Detailed maps & route notes
featuring turn-by-turn
directions and places of
interest.



Experts to handle all the
details, including moving
your luggage between hotels
while you're out exploring.



Scheduled taxi transfers to
bring you to and from each
day's walks.



Access to a Self-Guided
Flight Concierge—ask our
knowledgeable team to find
flights that sync with your
planned trip.



Delicious meals—many
are included.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our Self-Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate, with an average of 4-6 miles per day, with options every day to walk less. The terrain includes daily elevation gains and losses of up to 650 feet. Walks are on pavement, well-maintained dirt trails, either packed or rough with loose rocks and roots which require attention, as well as sandy beaches and rocky shores. This diverse itinerary

includes some of coastal Maine's most scenic natural treasures—the breathtaking mountains, forests, lakes and ocean shores of Acadia National Park, a renowned rocky coastline of crashing surf, majestic lighthouses overlooking the sweeping ocean, and spectacular vistas from atop summits and dramatic ledges. Reaching these locations requires two drives of 2-3 hours. Remember: preparation is the key to ensuring your tour readiness; the more you walk or participate in aerobic exercise prior to your trip, the more you will enjoy your experience!

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

May 65°/45°, Jun 74°/54°, Jul 79°/59°, Aug 78°/59°, Sep 70°/52°, Oct 59°/42°

Average Rainfall (in.)

May 4.6, Jun 4.1, Jul 3.5, Aug 3.3, Sep 4.5, Oct 5.3

DAY 1

Your *Maine: Portland, Camden & Acadia National Park* tour begins.
Optional walks: Peaks Island Loop and/or Portland: Eastern Promenade Trail and Munjoy Hill

4.1 miles, easy, 200-ft. elevation gain and loss and/or 3.6 miles, easy, 150-ft. elevation gain and loss

Arrive in Portland, Maine, one of New England's most historic and compelling cities. Hailed nationally as a foodie's paradise, it boasts a variety of restaurants that offer their individual takes on locally sourced produce and meats. From food trucks to gourmet establishments, artfully done cuisine is one of the cultural cornerstones of Maine's most populous city. *Bon Appétit* called it "America's Foodiest Small Town" while the *New York Times* says it's "one of the best places to eat in the Northeast." You have the chance to taste for yourself what everyone is salivating over.

You either rent a car (cost is not included in your tour price) or you drive your own during this unique Self-Guided Walking Adventure. Doing so gives you unprecedented freedom to explore as you wish and follow your own whims. Make your way to the Portland Harbor Hotel in the city's Old Port District. This historic property offers a touch of sophistication in an old-world setting. Valet parking is included here.

Arrive early enough in the day and you can enjoy two walks. First, set out directly from your hotel for the pier on Casco Bay to hop the ferry to Peaks Island (approximately \$8 per person at your expense). The scenic crossing takes about 20 minutes, and is sure to get you into the seafaring spirit of coastal Maine. Peaks Island is ideal for walkers—740 acres of nature preserve, charming summer cottages, shops and a wartime past, all connected by tranquil dirt and gravel roads. The Peaks Island Loop traces much of the island's perimeter, providing magnificent sea views and intimate glimpses of island life. A year-round population of fishermen, artists, and professionals call this tiny oasis home; many of them commute to the city daily. Your route passes sandy beaches, rocky shorelines and cute cottages, with ample opportunity to swim, picnic and explore World War II fortifications and learn about Maine's Civil War regiment at the Fifth Maine Museum. Bicycles and golf carts are available to rent if you'd like to see more of the island in less time.

Back in Portland, follow the Eastern Promenade Trail to Munjoy Hill. This lovely stroll along the Fore River leads you through a beautiful park designed by famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, notable for his creation of New York's Central Park. You may pause to take in the views or dip your toes in the waters of East End Beach. Continue to Fort Allen Park, ascending to its highest point for spectacular views of Casco Bay. Then you step into Portland's well-heeled neighborhood of Munjoy Hill. One of the city's most diverse and exclusive neighborhoods, the architecture of Munjoy Hill tells the story of Portland's social and cultural history. Its most prominent landmark, the 82-foot Portland Observatory, has been operating since 1807.

This evening, you have your pick from Portland's dynamic restaurant scene for dinner.

DAY 2

Owls Head State Park and Lighthouse. Rockland Breakwater Lighthouse. Beech Hill Preserve

0.3 miles, easy, no elevation gain or loss. 1.9 miles; easy, no elevation gain or loss. 1.9 miles; easy to moderate, 300-ft. elevation gain and loss

After breakfast at your hotel, you drive north along Maine's scenic Route 1, stopping to explore as you wish. Perhaps visit Freeport, where the L.L. Bean campus forms a charming village atmosphere. In

Brunswick, you might stroll the quad of Bowdoin College. And Bath is home to the Bath Iron Works, which makes warships for the U.S. Navy. For lunch, pause in Wiscasset, hugging a broad tidal river. It calls itself the prettiest town in Maine and its award-winning Red's Eats serves up an amazing lobster roll. After lunch, a scenic detour leads to the river town of Damariscotta, where the dramatic Pemaquid Lighthouse perches on a rocky shore.

Later, take a loop detour to enjoy a short stroll in Owls Head State Park. Walk out to Crescent Beach, hidden away on Ginn Point, a narrow finger of land pointing into the Atlantic. The beach once hosted an inn whose guests arrived by steamboat. While here, stop in the tiny village and the Owls Head Transportation Museum, brimming with classic cars, motorcycles and airplanes. If you haven't had lunch, the Owls Head General Store is said to make the best burgers in Maine. Take it to go and savor it in the state park. You can walk it off on the trail that leads to the stout white-brick lighthouse owned by the U.S. Coast Guard, scenically perched on a high cliff over Penobscot Bay.

Continue to Rockland, one of the largest exporters of lobster in the world. Follow its manmade breakwater to the Rockland Breakwater Lighthouse. The breakwater, nearly a mile long and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was built in the 1890s by the Army Corps of Engineers to shelter Rockland's harbor from storms. The lighthouse hosts an excellent museum of memorabilia from the Coast Guard. You might also peruse the Maine Lighthouse Museum on the mainland, or view the artwork of the Farnsworth Art Museum; work from three generations of the renowned Wyeth family are on display in its galleries.

Another scenic walk awaits at the Beech Hill Preserve, just ten minutes from Rockport village. The only bald hilltop in the region, Beech Hill is a bird lover's paradise. You follow a 1.9-mile loop trail through a stand of sugar maples and a hardwood forest of towering oaks. Nearly 300 acres are protected in this area rich in grassland and prolific, well-tended blueberry bushes. On the summit, take in the wide-open fields and the sod-roofed stone hut known as Beech Nut, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Your walk up is rewarded with stunning vistas of Penobscot Bay, the Camden Hills, and the St. George Peninsula.

Back on the road, head to Rockport, one of the hidden gems of the Maine coast. Named one of "America's Prettiest Towns" by *Forbes* magazine, it is home to the picturesque Marine Park, where tranquil panoramas and some old waterfront lime kilns greet you. Another ten-minute drive delivers you to Camden, passing the Belted Galloways of Aldermere Farm along the way. These hefty

bovines—distinguished black cattle sporting a white ring around their torsos—are commonly known as Oreo cookie cows.

Scenically set on Penobscot Bay, Camden is still a working harbor of fishing boats. During your stay, you might treat yourself to a voyage on one of the lobstering boats, taking in the remarkable coastline and learning about the lobster harvest from one who knows it best. You spend two nights in Camden at Lord Camden Inn in the heart of the village. After settling in, explore the delightful collection of shops, antiques, cafés, and the beautiful Camden Public Library on the waterfront. Tonight, choose from our roundup of favorite Camden restaurants for dinner on your own.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3

Camden Hills State Park: Mount Battie via Nature Trail and Tableland Trail. Afternoon options: Shoreline Trail and/or Maiden's Cliff via Maiden Cliff, Ridge, and Scenic Trail Cut-off

2.5 miles, moderate, 600-ft. elevation gain and loss or 2.7 miles, moderate, 600-ft. elevation gain and loss. 0.7 miles, easy, no elevation gain or loss and/or 1.7 miles, moderate to challenging, 650-ft. elevation gain and loss

Today's walk begins in neighboring Camden Hills State Park, where the summit of Mt. Battie beckons. You follow the Nature Trail along north-easterly facing slopes cloaked in old-growth forests. Your well-trodden path provides an inspiring survey of local flora and fauna, intersecting with the Tablelands Trail. You cross the auto road and later step onto the summit. The view from here is praised as one of the best in Maine; it even inspired Edna St. Vincent Millay to write her poem "Renascence." On a clear day, you can see Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park to the north. Below lie the coastal islands of western Penobscot Bay. It's the perfect spot to enjoy a picnic and ponder Millay's description of this magnificence: "Immensity made manifold."

As you exit Camden Hills State Park, look for the Shoreline Trail right across the street. Follow this pretty out-and-back path along the coast, while foamy surf lashes the rocks nearby. Picnic tables make this another good option for a lunch spot. Later, explore Camden on your own, perhaps stopping at the Cellardoor Winery. If you want to experience the full splendor of the harbor, embark a schooner or tall ship

for a thrilling sail, admiring mega-yachts, fishing boats and windjammers as you head into open water. Your innkeeper can assist you with your plans.

For those looking for a challenge, hike up to Maiden's Cliff in Camden State Park. On this moderate-to-steep climb, you trace the woodsy banks of a babbling brook through birch and beech groves, then scrambles over rocks and roots, leading to breathtaking views of Megunticook Lake from cliffs that soar to some 800 feet. Continue to Ridge Trail for more climbing to Miller Ledges, where you can marvel at Ragged and Bald Mountains and the entirety of the lake. You return to the trailhead the way you came, perhaps cooling off at the Megunticook Lake public beach.

This evening, try another of our dining recommendations in town.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4

Acadia National Park: Jesup Path and Hemlock Road Loop. Bar Island Trail and/or Bar Harbor Shore Path

1.8 miles, easy, no elevation gain or loss. 1.4 miles, easy, 100-ft. elevation gain and loss and/or 0.7 miles (one-way), easy, no elevation gain or loss

Following breakfast at your inn, bid farewell to your hosts for a two-hour drive to Bar Harbor, gateway to Acadia National Park. Along the way, you might go antiquing in Stockton Springs. Later, the remarkable Penobscot Narrows Bridge comes into view, a stunning engineering feat. There are only two other bridges in the U.S. constructed with its cradle-strand system. It is also home to the tallest bridge observation tower in the world, reaching 420 feet. Should you wish to ascend the tower and take in spectacular views, you can access it via the adjacent Fort Knox.

On Mount Desert Island, head to Sieur de Monts Spring, a tranquil park often called the "Heart of Acadia." From the park's Wild Gardens of Acadia botanical garden, a 1.8-mile loop leads you along the Jesup Path into birch and hemlock forests and onto a boardwalk. Amid views of Dorr Mountain, your route opens onto a lovely meadow, then heads back via Hemlock Road, an old fire road. Other pathways within the park lead to a Nature Center and the Abbe Museum, which chronicles the history of Maine's native people.

Later, you may check in to your Bar Harbor inn. This bustling town is often associated with a vaguely defined area known as “Down East” Maine. The term dates back to pre-revolutionary days, when cargo-laden ships from Boston and New York had to sail downwind and to the east before proceeding back to England. Today, its charms are distinct and its natural setting unrivalled.

Once you settle in, walk a couple of blocks to the waterfront and the Bar Island Trail. When the tide is low, a gravel bar is exposed that connects the town to the uninhabited Bar Island. It's pure pleasure to walk the length of the bar, examining the tidal pools along the way. On the island, follow forest trails and old roads to lovely views of Bar Harbor and to an old home site. If the tides do not allow you access, then head to the picturesque, historic Shore Path. Created around 1880, this scenic trail starts near the town pier and Agamont Park. As you walk the half mile along the eastern shore of town, admire the four Porcupine Islands, which are particularly beautiful at sunrise.

This evening, meet your Country Walkers representative for an overview of your time in Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park. Then choose from several recommended restaurants in town for dinner on your own.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5

Acadia National Park Loop Road. Great Head Trail or Ocean Path Trail: Sand Beach to Otter Point and return. Jordan Pond Path

1.7 or 2 miles, moderate, 300-ft. elevation gain and loss or 4.1 miles, easy to moderate, 350-ft. elevation gain and loss. 3.2 miles, easy to moderate, 100-ft. elevation gain and loss

Today, you explore the Acadia Byway, a 27-mile stretch also known as the Park Loop Road that traverses the eastern reaches of Mount Desert Island. Your route today is a designated All-American Road—part of a network of byways established to recognize, preserve, and enhance the scenic roadways of the U.S. Here, in the heart of Acadia National Park, rocky shores rise up to soaring peaks skirted with spruce and fir forests. The old carriage roads you encounter are a legacy of the days when John D. Rockefeller and other elite families built sprawling shingle-style cottages here, creating a vibrant community of the American leisure upper class. Today, endless trails invite you to pull on your walking shoes and explore more deeply, strolling into vast meadows and past glittering lakes.

Begin the day with a full breakfast and a stop at a local deli for a picnic lunch to enjoy later. Your first destination is Sand Beach, nestled between rocky shores and mountains. Its unique sands are composed of shell fragments pulverized by the crashing surf. The Great Head Trail—one of the most scenic and dramatic in Acadia—begins alongside the beach, climbing a series of granite steps. Meander up the side of the wall up a gradual grade, stopping to take in spectacular views. At the highest point, explore the remains of a 1915 tea house that once served hikers. Alternately, walk the Ocean Path Trail, ambling between the waters of the Atlantic and the Park Loop Road. Be sure to take time to admire the trail's stunning landmarks—Thunder Hole, a narrow crevice in the cliffs lashed by pounding surf, and Otter Cliffs, reaching to 110 feet.

After, continue to Jordan Pond, a soothing lake of pristine calm waters encircled by glorious mountains, including The Bubbles, a pair of peaks sculpted by glaciers at the water's northern end. Walking the shores of the Jordan Pond Path soothes the soul. As you walk, keep an eye out for the Common Loon and the Common Yellowthroat and Spotted Sandpiper. Look skyward to search for the Peregrine Falcon, which breed on the cliffs here. This peaceful walk will find you crossing wooden bridges, following elevated boardwalks and scrambling over rocks. The perfect spot to end your outing is the Jordan Pond House overlooking the lake, where their golden, lighter-than-air popovers have become Acadia-famous!

This evening, savor another memorable meal at one of Bar Harbor's many restaurants.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6

Acadia National Park. Beech Mountain Loop Trail. Ship Harbor Trail. Bass Harbor Head Lighthouse Trail

1.2 miles, moderate, 350-ft. elevation gain and loss. 1.4 miles, easy, no elevation gain or loss. 0.4 miles, easy, no elevation gain or loss

After another bountiful breakfast, you head out to explore the western half of Mount Desert Island. This is the side of the island preferred by locals, untouristed and tranquil. No wonder it's known as the "Quiet Side." As you follow stunning footpaths, revel in both its remarkable untouched beauty and the rich maritime traditions evident in hushed fishing villages and rustic lobster pounds.

Much of the Quiet Side is protected parkland, and you begin your day with a half-hour drive to the trailhead

of Beech Mountain, a scenic slope rising between Long Pond and Echo Lake. Your trail—the Beech Mountain Loop—skirts the west side on a path that starts out smooth and becomes rockier as you ascend, offering views of Long Pond and Mansell and Bernard Mountains beyond. At the summit, climb to the fire tower's wraparound platform for spectacular views. This structure, listed on the National Register of Historic Fire Towers, has helped protect the surrounding area from fire for generations. Your trail continues along the north ridge and soon returns you to trailhead.

You may want to time your day so that you arrive in the tiny town of Southwest Harbor for lunch. "So'West," as it is locally known, is about a 25-minute drive from the trailhead. Browse its shops and admire the yachts docked at the pier, then stop at Beal's Lobster Pier, a favorite among locals and visitors alike. You can dine in or pick up a fresh seafood treat here to enjoy as a picnic along the Ship Harbor Nature Trail, your next walk. This easy, pleasant path follows the narrow inlet of Ship Harbor, with views of Little Duck and Great Duck Islands, and Great Cranberry Island.

Continue with a short drive to the Bass Harbor Head Lighthouse, part of the National Register of Historic Places. Perched on a low cliff of coastal rocks, this brick beacon was built in 1858. A leisurely stroll here—made more sublime by gentle sea breezes and clean ocean air—is an ideal finale to your walks in this splendid corner of Maine.

As you drive back to Bar Harbor, you may want to stop in Somesville. Established in 1761, it is the island's oldest settlement and home to a picturesque arched wooden bridge that spans the northern edge of Somes Sound. After time to admire its graceful arc, explore more of Bar Harbor and enjoy a final dinner on your own in town.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7

Optional visit: Cadillac Mountain. Your *Maine: Portland, Camden & Acadia National Park* tour concludes

Early risers are in for an unforgettable experience this morning. Be up before breakfast for a drive to the summit of Cadillac Mountain, about 15 minutes away. Vehicle reservations are required to drive up Cadillac Summit Road (at your own expense; purchasable *by you* 90 days prior to (recommended!)). Please note that while Country Walkers is unable to provide you with a Cadillac Summit Road vehicle

reservation, your tour does include an Acadia National Park Private Vehicle Weekly Pass, required to access all walks and drives in Acadia National Park. This weekly pass will be provided to you along with your Route Notes. Cadillac Mountain is not only the highest point on the North American Atlantic coast—at 1,530 feet—its treeless summit is also the first place on the continent to see the sun rise. It is truly magical to witness Bar Harbor, Frenchman Bay, and the open waters of the ocean as they are illuminated by the first light of day. After time here, return to your inn for a final breakfast and onward travels.

Included Meals: Breakfast

What's Included

Tour Only

Boutique accommodations	✓
6 on-tour meals: 6 breakfasts	✓
Detailed water- and tear-resistant Route Notes and maps	✓
Orientation phone call (Day 1) and meeting (Day 4) with a Country Walkers representative	✓
Local representative available 24/7	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary: Acadia National Park Private Vehicle Weekly Pass	✓